

Resource center a hit with teachers

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Catholic school teachers in Monroe County can do their own version of one-stop shopping thanks to the Teacher Resource Center at St. Ambrose School in Irondequoit.

The center, which opened in January of this year, is available to teachers from the county's 33 Catholic schools every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon, according to Linda Lattuca, the center's part-time director. Lattuca, who also is the librarian at Seton Catholic School in Brighton, noted that the resource center offers a number of services. Among them are teacher workshops, a machine that laminates posters and such bulletin-board items as letters of the alphabet, a library containing videos and books on education, and a bindery machine that can

be used to turn students' writings into books.

The center is operated under the auspices of the Diocese of Rochester's Department of Catholic



Schools through funding from the Thanks Giving Appeal, the largest source of revenue in the diocese's annual operating budget.

Lattuca, a veteran elementary school teacher herself, said diocesan schools leaders had been discussing the idea of such a center for a few years, and that she researched public-school teacher centers before working with the diocese to create the one at St. Ambrose. By centralizing such services as lamination, she said, the center is able to cut costs for schools and eliminate duplication of services.

She added that prior to the center's establishment, Catholic school teachers in Monroe County had to do much more traveling to find the ser-



Karin von Volgtlander/Catholic Courier

Kathy Burton, a teacher at Seton Catholic School in Brighton, presents a Nov. 7 workshop offered by the Teacher Resource Center.

vices it offered, including workshops. Such workshops have become increasingly important in recent years as New York state has raised its standards for students, putting more pressure on teachers to train continually.

"Instead of them having to search high and low for what they need, we're offering it and they're able to take advantage of it," she said.

One teacher who has benefited from such workshops is Sharon Willison, who teaches first grade at St. Pius Tenth School in Chili. The center's regularly scheduled workshops have saved her time she once spent searching for workshops, she said.

"There'd be a workshop here and a workshop there," she said. "(Now) there are workshops in one place."

Lattuca added that the center generally slates its workshops after school hours, so that teachers aren't forced to sign up for all-day workshops that may conflict with their

schedules.

Lattuca said that the center also has organized "teacher sharing days" at which teachers from various schools who teach the same grade level swapped ideas. Willison said that she thoroughly enjoyed her sharing day.

"I love the camaraderie," Willison said. "It's fun when you're there, and you see and talk with (other teachers) and see what they're doing."

Nancy R. Chesterton, who teaches second grade at Holy Cross School in Charlotte, said she also benefited from a sharing day by getting some new ideas for encouraging students to behave in class. For example, one teacher shared her idea for rewarding students' good behavior by having them place marbles in a jar. When the jar filled up, the students got a reward, she said.

"It sounded like it worked really well for (the teacher), and she's used it for a number of years," Chesterton said.

Each Monroe County Catholic

school designates a representative to the center, Lattuca said, and both Willison and Chesterton serve as their schools' representatives. The representatives meet regularly with Lattuca to discuss how to improve the center's services and how to best promote them, she said. She added that the center is uniquely tailored to meet the needs of Catholic-school teachers. For example, she said, a Nov. 12 workshop will focus on "Using Music to Enhance Children's Liturgies." The workshop presenter will cover using music in classroom and school-wide prayer.

Although the center's ability to present Catholic-oriented workshops is important, Lattuca did note that a more earthly item seems to be the center's greatest draw — the lamination machine. Teachers can laminate bulletin-board items they once had to create anew each year by cutting them out of construction paper, she said.

"If they laminate them first, they'll last forever."

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RECOGNIZING

DeSales High School in Geneva has hired John Norvell, former director of alumni relations at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, as its director of alumni and community relations. He is a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel, a decorated Vietnam War veteran, former assistant professor of history at the U.S. Air Force Academy and a freelance writer.

St. Dominic Parish has formed a Knights of Columbus council. The charter for the Bishop Joseph L. Hogan Council No. 13194 was presented during a dinner Oct. 12, at which the late bishop's brother, Father Michael Hogan, spoke. The council meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. Dominic's parish center, 6 Canandaigua St., Shortsville.

Judy Michael is the new director of Rochester's Problem Pregnancy Help Center, which is a Catholic lay ministry. She replaces Mariene Beghini, who retired this past summer.